

IN THE CLAIMS

1-12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A method of stabilizing a lumbar-sacral junction for fusion comprising:

installing a foot portion of a plate partially into the anterior portion of intervertebral space between L5 and S1;

installing first screws from the front of the plate through holes in an upper portion of the plate into L5; and

installing second screws from the front of the foot portion of the plate downwardly through the foot portion and out the bottom of the foot portion into S1.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 13 and further comprising:

installing said ~~downwardly-installed~~ second screws through the foot portion on convergent paths in S1.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 and further comprising:

extending said ~~downwardly-installed~~ second screws through the S1-S2 junction.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 and further comprising:

seating the ~~downwardly-installed~~ second screws in the plate and pulling L5 and S1 toward each other and compressing fusion material in said intervertebral space.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 13 and further comprising:
seating a bottom surface of said foot portion atop the superior end plate of S1.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 17 and further comprising:
engaging fusion material by the inferior end plate and superior end plate of L5 and S1,
respectively, and
compressing fusion material between said end plates posterior to said foot portion in the
L5-S1 junction while pulling L5 and S1 toward each other.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 16 and further comprising:
providing anti-backout devices for said downwardly-installed screws.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 13 and further comprising the steps of
providing said first screws and said second screws, ~~with~~ wherein said first screws and said
second screws each comprise conical tapered head surfaces; and
installing an anti-backout screw with a conical head surface adapted to engage and
interlock with the conical tapered head surfaces of ~~the first mentioned~~ said first screws to
prevent backout of ~~the first mentioned~~ said first screws when the anti-backout screw is fixed in
said plate.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 20 and further comprising:
screwing the anti-backout screw tightly into engagement with the plate after installing ~~the~~
~~first mentioned~~ said first screws.

22-24. (canceled)

25. (new) A method of stabilizing a lumbar-sacral junction for fusion comprising:

installing a foot portion of a plate partially into the anterior portion of intervertebral space between L5 and S1;

installing first screws from the front of the plate through holes in an upper portion of the plate into L5;

installing second screws from the front of the foot portion of the plate downwardly through the foot portion and out the bottom of the foot portion into S1; and

extending said second screws through the S1-S2 junction.

26. (new) The method of claim 25, further comprising:

seating the second screws in the plate and pulling L5 and S1 toward each other and compressing fusion material in said intervertebral space.

27. (new) The method of claim 25 and further comprising:

seating a bottom surface of said foot portion atop the superior end plate of S1.

28. (new) The method of claim 27 and further comprising:

engaging fusion material by the inferior end plate and superior end plate of L5 and S1, respectively, and

compressing fusion material between said end plates posterior to said foot portion in the L5-S1 junction while pulling L5 and S1 toward each other.

29. (new) The method of claim 25 and further comprising:

providing anti-backout devices for each of said second screws.

30. (new) The method of claim 25 and further comprising the steps of providing said first screws and said second screws wherein said first screws and said second screws each comprise conical tapered head surfaces; and

installing an anti-backout screw with a conical head surface adapted to engage and interlock with the conical tapered head surfaces of said first screws to prevent backout of said first screws when the anti-backout screw is fixed in said plate.

31. (new) The method of claim 30 and further comprising:

screwing the anti-backout screw tightly into engagement with the plate after installing said first screws.

32. (new) The method of claim 25 and further comprising the steps of providing a set of screws from at least one of said first screws and said second screws with conical tapered head surfaces; and

installing an anti-backout screw with a conical head surface adapted to engage and interlock with the conical surfaces of the set of screws to prevent backout of the set of screws when the anti-backout screw is fixed in said plate.

33. (new) The method of claim 32 and further comprising:

screwing the anti-backout screw tightly into engagement with the plate after installing the set of screws.

34. (new) The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of providing said first screws and said second screws wherein said first screws and said second screws each comprise conical tapered head surfaces; and

installing an anti-backout screw with a conical head surface adapted to engage and interlock with the conical tapered head surfaces of said first screws to prevent backout of said first screws when the anti-backout screw is fixed in said plate.

35. (new) The method of claim 34 and further comprising:
screwing the anti-backout screw tightly into engagement with the plate after installing said first screws.

36. (new) The method of claim 15 and further comprising:
seating said second screws in the plate and pulling L5 and S1 toward each other and compressing fusion material in said intervertebral space.

37. (new) The method of claim 15 and further comprising:
seating a bottom surface of said foot portion atop the superior end plate of S1.

38. (new) The method of claim 15 and further comprising:

engaging fusion material by the inferior end plate and superior end plate of L5 and S1, respectively, and

compressing fusion material between said end plates posterior to said foot portion in the L5-S1 junction while pulling L5 and S1 toward each other.

39. (new) The method of claim 17 and further comprising:

engaging fusion material by the inferior end plate and superior end plate of L5 and S1, respectively.

40. (new) The method of claim 17 and further comprising:

compressing fusion material between said end plates posterior to said foot portion in the L5-S1 junction while pulling L5 and S1 toward each other.

41. (new) The method of claim 13 and further comprising the steps of providing a set of screws from at least one of said first screws and said second screws with conical tapered head surfaces; and

installing an anti-backout screw with a conical head surface adapted to engage and interlock with the conical surfaces of the set of screws to prevent backout of the set of screws when the anti-backout screw is fixed in said plate.

42. (new) The method of claim 41 and further comprising:

screwing the anti-backout screw tightly into engagement with the plate after installing the set of screws.

43. (new) The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of providing a set of screws from at least one of said first screws and said second screws with conical tapered head surfaces; and

installing an anti-backout screw with a conical head surface adapted to engage and interlock with the conical surfaces of the set of screws to prevent backout of the set of screws when the anti-backout screw is fixed in said plate.

44. (new) The method of claim 43 and further comprising:

screwing the anti-backout screw tightly into engagement with the plate after installing the set of screws.